

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3612

INFO AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMCONSUL KARACHI

AMCONSUL LAHORE

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 8851

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PK

SUBJECT: SECURITY SITUATION IN BALUCHISTAN

1. SUMMARY: WE BELIEVE THE IRANIANS HAVE BEEN PAINTING THE SECURITY SITUATION IN PAKISTANI BALUCHISTAN IN MUCH DARKER COLORS THAN IS WARRANTED. OUR IMPRESSION FROM THIS SIDE OF THE BORDER IS THAT THE SECURITY SITUATION IN THE PROVINCE HAS SETTLED DOWN AND THAT SOME DISAFFECTED BALUCHI LEADERS ARE REENTERING THE COUNTRY'S CONVENTIONAL POLITICAL PROCESS.
END SUMMARY.

2. THE SECURITY SITUATION IN BALUCHISTAN HAS IMPROVED IN THE LAST SEVERAL MONTHS. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS, INCLUDING CHIEF MARTIAL LAW ADMINISTRATOR (CMLA) ZIA'S ANNOUNCEMENT OF AN AMNESTY FOR DISAFFECTED BALUCHI LEADERS, AND HIS OFFER TO THEM TO COME OUT OF THE HILLS AND JOIN THE POLITICAL PROCESS, HAVE LED US TO CONCLUDE THAT THINGS HAVE SETTLED DOWN IN THE PROVINCE. CONGEN KARACHI REPORTS THAT NUMBERS OF DISAFFECTED BALUCHI LEADERS ARE REENTERING CONFIDENTIAL

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THE POLITICAL PROCESS.

3. DAO TELLS US THAT THE LEVEL OF ARMED CLASHES AND MILITARY INCIDENTS HAS DECLINED SIGNIFICANTLY FROM HIGH POINTS IN 1975 AND 1976 AND IS CONSIDERABLY LOWER THAN THE 1974 LEVEL WHEN ANTI-GOVERNMENT ACTIVITY WAS AT ITS PEAK. IN HIGH ACTIVITY PERIODS LAST YEAR, THE

NUMBER OF INCIDENTS RANGED FROM 15 TO 20 PER MONTH, ALTHOUGH THIS FIGURE MUST BE INTERPRETED IN LIGHT OF THE ARMY'S POLICY IN THE PROVINCE TO ACTIVELY SEARCH OUT REBEL FORCES. WE RECEIVED REPORTS OF COMPANY SIZE ATTACKS IN WHICH TEN TO TWENTY WERE REPORTED KILLED ON BOTH SIDES PER MONTH. DAO NOW ESTIMATES, AND CONGEN KARACHI AGREES, THAT ARMED INCIDENTS AVERAGE TWO TO THREE PER MONTH AND ARE GENERALLY "HIT-AND-RUN" OPERATIONS BY SMALL BANDS.

4. THE SECURITY SITUATION HAS IMPROVED TO THE POINT THAT THE CORPS COMMANDER HAD REMOVED A "SUBSTANTIAL" NUMBER OF TROOPS FROM BALUCHISTAN TO SIND. THE CORPS COMMANDER TOLD OUR ARMY ATTACHE THAT THIS MOVE WAS PRIMARILY DESIGNED TO BEEF UP THE ARMY'S CAPABILITY IN KARACHI TO REACT TO ELECTION RELATED TROUBLE. THE CMLA HAS ALSO PUBLICLY AGREED TO WITHDRAW TROOPS FROM BALUCHISTAN. IN FACT, ZIA HAS GIVEN ORDERS THAT TROOPS BE MOVED INTO OLD BRITISH CANTONMENTS PRIOR TO THE OCTOBER POLLING DATE, THUS MEETING OPPOSITION DEMANDS THAT THE ARMY NOT BE IN THE FIELD WHILE LEAVING ITS CAPABILITY BASICALLY UNCHANGED.

5. THE CALM OVERALL PICTURE IS ONLY CONTRADICTED BY THE RECENT INCREASE IN AGITATION, REPORTED BY CONGEN KARACHI, BY THE MARI TRIBE. MANY OF THE MARIS CROSSED INTO AFGHANISTAN DURING THE PAST THREE YEARS AND THE GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN HAS BEEN MAKING EFFORTS TO ATTRACT THEM BACK - CONFIDENTIAL

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BUT WITH LITTLE SUCCESS. AFTER SOME TEN MONTHS OF INACTIVITY THE MARIS HAVE AGAIN BEGUN SMALL UNIT, HIT AND RUN RAIDS IN BALUCHISTAN TARGETED MAINLY ON ARMY CONVOYS, PATROLS AND CAMPS. THESE RAIDS NUMBER ONLY TWO OR THREE PER MONTH AND AS SUCH DO NOT POSE ANY IMMEDIATE THREAT TO THE STABILITY OF BALUCHISTAN ALTHOUGH THE POTENTIAL FOR TROUBLE IS THERE.
HUMMEL

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